

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD
SPECIAL WORK MEETING OF THE MAYOR & COUNCIL
MARCH 31, 2009 MINUTES
MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
101 Washington Avenue
7:00 PM**

1. Opening of the Meeting:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Birkner at 7:00 pm. Mayor Birkner then read the Open Public Meetings Law Statement: "This meeting which conforms with the Open Public Meetings law, Chapter 231, Public Laws of 1975, is a special Borough Council meeting. Notices have been filed with our local official newspapers and posted on the municipal bulletin board."

2. Roll Call:

Mayor Birkner - present
Councilmember Grefrath - present
Councilmember Miller - present
Council President Phayre - present
Councilmember Quinn - present
Councilmember Sciara - present
Councilmember Waneck - present
Borough Administrator Hoffmann – present
Borough Attorney Huntington - present
Borough Engineer Senkevich - present
Borough Clerk Hughes - present

Committee Assignments:

Finance, Administration & Capital Projects
Police & OEM
Fire & Ambulance
Health & Recreation
Public Properties
Land Use

3. Flag Salute:

Mayor Birkner led those present in the salute to the flag.

4. Presentation by Hackensack Riverkeeper: A Guide to Protecting the Hackensack River's Category One Waterways - "Managing the Pascack Valley's Waterways"

Mayor Birkner welcomed those present. He introduced the Hackensack Riverkeeper organization. Mayor Birkner explained that the purpose of the presentation is to foster a better understanding of the Category 1 (C1) waterway designation, the supporting regulations and its impact. Another goal is to begin the process of cooperation publicly that has been discussed by the Pascack Valley Mayors regarding flooding, flood control, and waterway maintenance. Mayor Birkner said he hopes the presentation will inspire all Pascack Valley municipalities to work collectively towards making an application for stream cleaning permits covering the length of the Pascack Brook and the Musquapsink.

Mayor Birkner thanked and congratulated the Hackensack Riverkeeper organization for having 3100 watershed acres preserved.

Captain Bill Sheehan gave an overview of the presentation. He introduced Nick Vos-Wein and Michael Bennett, who would further discuss C-1 waterways. Captain Sheehan noted the Hackensack Riverkeeper Organization received a grant from the Watershed Institute, which is funded through the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, to design and present this program.

Mr. Vos-Wein is a project manager for the Hackensack Riverkeeper. He discussed surface

water quality standards and regulations that enforce buffers along C1 waterways. He compared and contrasted the Flood Hazard Control Act and the NJPDES Municipal Stormwater Regulation Program. He defined a flood hazard area, Riparian zone, and Special Water Resource Protection Area (SWRPA).

Mr. Bennett is an ecological engineer. He discussed how to be good stewards of watershed areas. He explained how compliance with the spirit of the regulations better enhances a community. Mr. Bennett discussed some C1 issues specific to Westwood.

Mr. Huntington commented that the regulations seem to obstruct mitigating flood issues. Mr. Bennett said the C1 regulations restrict what can be done to mitigate flooding. The priority is clean water over flooding. He noted it is unfortunate that permitting is so problematic. Mr. Bennett had no suggestions on how to balance stewardship with flood mitigation.

Capt. Sheehan pointed out that the purpose of the regulations is the biological integrity of the waters. The need to restore waterways and provide clean water is first and foremost.

Mr. Bennett discussed water gardens and rain barrels as a future Stormwater management focus. He noted that a lot of change will have to happen in the public right of way, since private property will not change quickly.

5. Public Forum:

A question and answer session was held after the presentations. The format was informal, with residents and elected officials free to ask questions of any of the presenters. Topics including flood jurisdiction control for upstream municipalities; containing stormwater on site; RSIS regulations; hardship exemptions and waivers; and collaborative efforts between municipalities to mitigate flooding.

Council President Phayre noted the need to work jointly and obtain as much information as possible to work towards mitigating flooding. Mr. Bennett recommended establishing a flood management organization.

Capt. Sheehan said there are ways to mitigate flooding and preserve water quality. It has to do with the cultural view of Stormwater as a resource. He proposed regional planning based on watersheds, not on artificial municipal boundaries.

Mayor Birkner said the purpose of the meeting was for residents and sister municipalities to recognize constrictions and restraints on flood mitigation. While balancing drinking water and ecology, the State must also recognize flood hazards. Mayor Birkner said this meeting was a

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starting point. He noted the Pascack Valley Mayors have been discussing collaborative efforts to ease the burdens of residents downstream rather than shifting problems. Mayor Birkner hoped this meeting would highlight the challenges in managing waterways and bring the realization it will take a group effort to ease the burden and map a direction for the future. Council President Phayre pointed out that Pascack Valley municipalities have acted cooperatively in the past. He believes this presentation will be a catalyst for the future.

6. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Councilmember Sciara

Second: Councilmember Miller

Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative.

The time was 9:10 pm.

Attest:

(signed) Karen Hughes

Karen Hughes, RMC, Borough Clerk

Proofed by: Denise Holmes, Deputy Clerk